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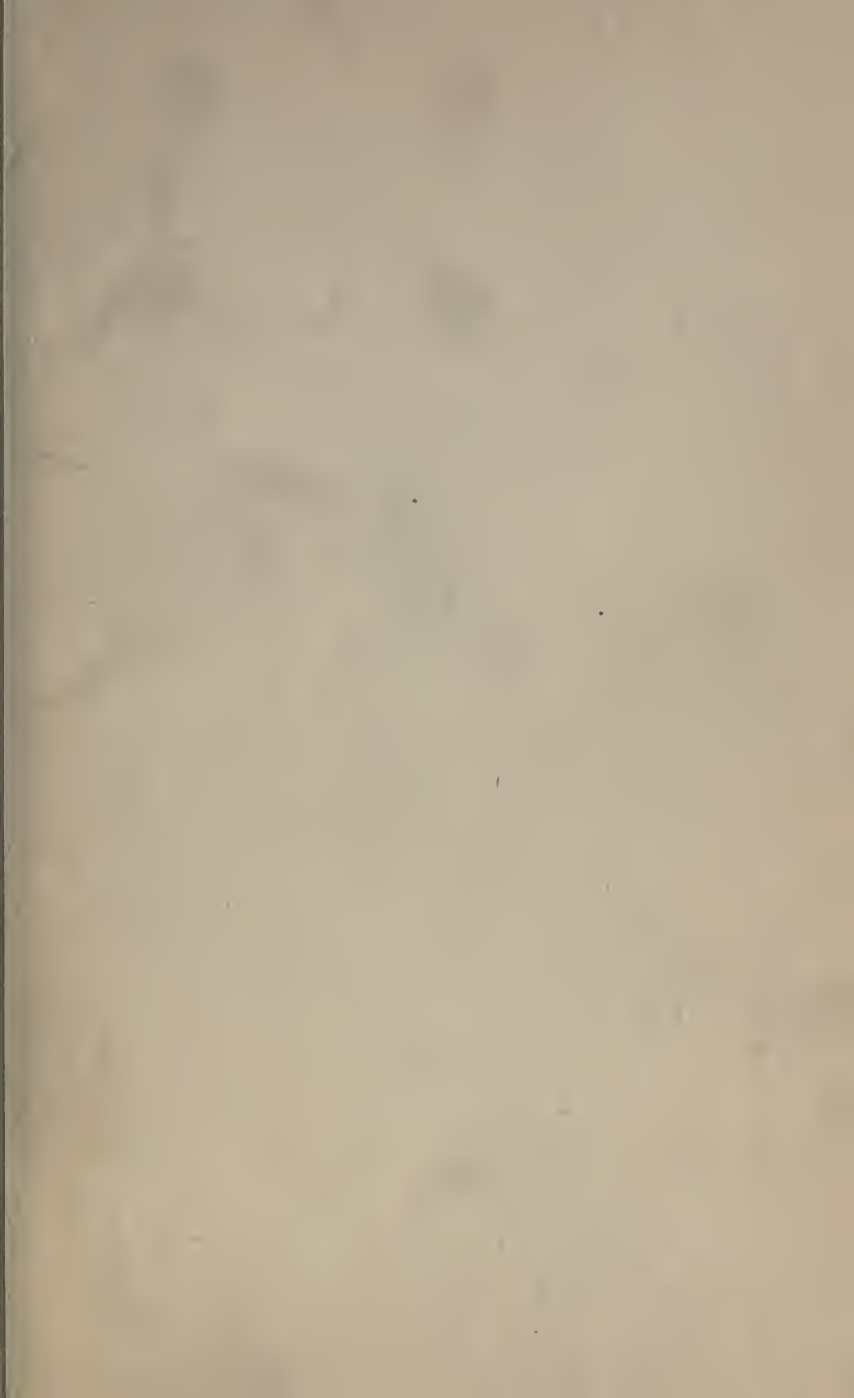
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ONCFELLOW'S
EVANGELINE

By James Nelson & Sons



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EVANGELINE.

A TALE OF ACADIE.

Short Studies in English Literature

No. VII.

LONGFELLOW'S
EVANGELINE



THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN
AND NEW YORK



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P R E F A C E

LONGFELLOW's Prefatory Note to the poem of 'Evangeline' runs as follows :—

'In the year 1713, Acadia, or, as it is now named, Nova Scotia, was ceded to Great Britain by the French. The wishes of the inhabitants seem to have been little consulted in the change, and they with great difficulty were induced to take the oaths of allegiance to the British Government. Some time after this, war having again broken out, the Acadians were accused of having assisted the French at the siege of Beau Séjour. The British Government ordered them to be removed from their homes and dispersed throughout the other colonies. This resolution was not communicated to the inhabitants till measures had been matured to carry it into immediate effect; when the Governor, having issued a summons calling the people to a meeting, informed them that their lands, tenements, and cattle of all kinds were forfeited to the British Crown, that he had orders to remove them in vessels to distant colonies, and they must remain in custody till their embarkation.'

For the British view of the incident the student is referred to A. G. Bradley's *Fight with France for North America*. It must be remembered, however, that the central idea of the poem is not political. It is a simple tale of human devotion, and the outward circumstances are of secondary consideration to the reader.

EVANGELINE

THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines
and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct
in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their
bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neigh-
bouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of
the forest.

This is the forest primeval ; but where are the hearts
that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland
the voice of the huntsman ?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of
Acadian farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the
woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image
of heaven ?

Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers for-
ever departed !
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts
of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far
o'er the ocean.
Nought but tradition remains of the beautiful village of
Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures,
and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's
devotion,
List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines
of the forest ;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

PART THE FIRST

I

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of
Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to
the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks
without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with
labour incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides ; but at stated seasons the
flood-gates

Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er
the meadows.

West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards
and cornfields

Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain ; and away
to the northward

Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the
mountains

Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty
Atlantic

Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their
station descended.

There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian
village.

Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and
of hemlock,

Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of
the Henries.

Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows ; and
gables projecting

Over the basement below protected and shaded the
doorway.

There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when
brightly the sunset

Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on the
chimneys,

Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in
kirtles

Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the
golden

Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles
within doors

Mingled their sounds with the whirl of the wheels and
the songs of the maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and
the children

Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to
bless them.

Reverend walked he among them ; and up rose matrons
and maidens,

Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate
welcome.

Then came the labourers home from the field, and
serenely the sun sank

Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from
the belfry

Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the
village

Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense
ascending,

Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and
contentment.

Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian
farmers,—

Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were
they free from

Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of
republics.

Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their
windows ;

But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of
the owners ;

There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in
abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the
Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of
Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres ; and with him, directing his
household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the
village.
Stalworth and stately in form was the man of seventy
winters ;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with
snow-flakes ;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as
brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen
summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the
thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown
shade of her tresses !
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed
in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at
noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah ! fair in sooth was the
maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell
from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with
his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon
them,

Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of
beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and
the ear-rings,
Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as
an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long
generations.
But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after
confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction
upon her.
When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of
exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of the
farmer
Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea ; and
a shady
Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine wreathing
around it.
Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath ; and
a footpath
Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the
meadow.
Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by a
penthouse,
Such as the traveller sees in regions remote by the
roadside,
Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of
Mary.

Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the well
with its moss-grown

Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the
horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the north, were
the barns and the farm-yard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the antique
ploughs and the harrows ;

There were the folds for the sheep ; and there, in his
feathered seraglio,

Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with
the selfsame

Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter.

Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a village.

In each one

Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch ; and a
staircase,

Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous
corn-loft.

There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek and
innocent inmates

Murmuring ever of love ; while above in the variant
breezes

Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of
mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the farmer
of Grand-Pré

Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed his
household.

Many a youth, as he knelt in church and opened his
missal,

Fixed his eyes upon her as the saint of his deepest
devotion ;

Happy was he who might touch her hand or the hem of
her garment !

Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness
befriended,

And, as he knocked and waited to hear the sound of
her footsteps,

Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the
knocker of iron ;

Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the
village,

Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as he
whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the music.

But, among all who came, young Gabriel only was
welcome ;

Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the blacksmith,
Who was a mighty man in the village, and honoured
of all men ;

For, since the birth of time, throughout all ages and
nations,

Has the craft of the smith been held in repute by the
people.

Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children from
earliest childhood

Grew up together as brother and sister ; and Father
Felician,

Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had taught
them their letters

Out of the self-same book, with the hymns of the
church and the plain-song.

But when the hymn was sung, and the daily lesson
completed,
Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil the
blacksmith.
There at the door they stood, with wondering eyes to
behold him
Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as a
plaything,
Nailing the shoe in its place ; while near him the tire
of the cart-wheel
Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle of
cinders.
Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gathering
darkness
Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through every
cranny and crevice,
Warm by the forge within they watched the labouring
bellows,
And as its panting ceased, and the sparks expired in
the ashes,
Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going into
the chapel.
Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop of the
eagle,
Down the hillside bounding, they glided away o'er the
meadow.
Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous nests on
the rafters,
Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone, which the
swallow
Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the sight of
its fledglings ;

Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of the swallow !

Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer were children.

He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of the morning,

Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought into action.

She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes of a woman.

'Sunshine of Saint Eulalie' was she called ; for that was the sunshine

Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards with apples ;

She, too, would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance,

Filling it with love and the ruddy faces of children.

II

Now had the season returned, when the nights grow colder and longer,

And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion enters.

Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air, from the ice-bound,

Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical islands.

Harvests were gathered in ; and wild with the winds of September

Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel.

All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.
Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded
their honey
Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters
asserted
Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the
foxes.
Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that
beautiful season,
Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of
All-Saints!
Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light;
and the landscape
Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.
Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless
heart of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in
harmony blended.
Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the
farm-yards,
Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of
pigeons,
All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and
the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the golden
vapours around him;
While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and
yellow,
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree
of the forest
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with
mantles and jewels.

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness.

Day with its burden and heat had departed, and twilight descending

Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the herds to the homestead.

Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other,

And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening.

Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer, Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,

Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.

Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the seaside,

Where was their favourite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog,

Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,

Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers ; Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept ; their protector,

When from the forest at night, through the starry silence, the wolves howled.

Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes,

Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odour.

Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks,

While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles,
Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson,
Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms.
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded their udders
Unto the milkmaid's hand ; whilst loud and in regular cadence
Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets descended.
Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter were heard in the farm-yard,
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into stillness ;
Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the valves of the barn-doors,
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the farmer
Sat in his elbow-chair and watched how the flames and the smoke-wreaths
Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him,
Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,
Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.
Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair

Laughed in the flickering light ; and the pewter plates
on the dresser
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies
the sunshine.
Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of
Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian
vineyards.
Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline
seated,
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner
behind her.
Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent
shuttle,
While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like the
drone of a bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song and united the fragments
together.
As in a church, when the chant of the choir at in-
tervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest
at the altar,
So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion
the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard, and,
suddenly lifted,
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung back
on its hinges.
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was Basil
the blacksmith,

And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was
with him.

‘Welcome!’ the farmer exclaimed, as their footsteps
paused on the threshold,

‘Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take thy place
on the settle

Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty
without thee;

Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the box of
tobacco;

Never so much thyself art thou as when through the
curling

Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly and jovial
face gleams

Round and red as the harvest-moon through the mist
of the marshes.’

Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil
the blacksmith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the
fireside:—

‘Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest and
thy ballad!

Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when others are
filled with

Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin before
them.

Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked up
a horseshoe.’

Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evangeline
brought him,

And with a coal from the embers had lighted, he
slowly continued:—

‘Four days now are passed since the English ships at
their anchors

Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth, with their cannon
pointed against us.

What their design may be is unknown ; but all are
commanded

On the morrow to meet in the church, where his
Majesty’s mandate

Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas ! in the
meantime

Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the people.’

Then made answer the farmer : ‘Perhaps some friendlier
purpose

Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the harvests
in England

By untimely rains or untimelier heat have been blighted,
And from our bursting barns they would feed their
cattle and children.’

‘Not so thinketh the folk in the village,’ said, warmly,
the blacksmith,

Shaking his head, as in doubt ; then, heaving a sigh,
he continued :—

‘Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour, nor Port
Royal.

Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on its
outskirts,

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of to-
morrow.

Arms have been taken from us, and warlike weapons
of all kinds ;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith’s sledge and the
scythe of the mower.’

Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial farmer :—

‘Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our flocks and our cornfields,

Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged by the ocean,
Than our fathers in forts, besieged by the enemy’s cannon.
Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no shadow
of sorrow

Fall on this house and hearth ; for this is the night of the contract.

Built are the house and the barn. The merry lads of the village

Strongly have built them and well ; and, breaking the glebe round about them,

Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food for a twelvemonth.

René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers and inkhorn.

Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy of our children ?’

As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover’s,

Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her father had spoken,

And, as they died on his lips, the worthy notary entered.

III

Bent like a labouring oar, that toils in the surf of the ocean,

Bent, but not broken, by age was the form of the notary public ;

Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the maize,
 hung
Over his shoulders ; his forehead was high ; and
 glasses with horn bows
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom supernal.
Father of twenty children was he, and more than a
 hundred
Children's children rode on his knee, and heard his
 great watch tick.
Four long years in the times of the war had he
 languished a captive,
Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of
 the English.
Now, though warier grown, without all guile or sus-
 picion,
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple, and
 childlike.
He was beloved by all, and most of all by the children ;
For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night to water the
 horses,
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child who
 unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers
 of children ;
And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in the
 stable,
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut up in a
 nutshell,
And of the marvellous powers of four-leaved clover and
 horseshoes,
With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the village.

Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil the
blacksmith,

Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly extending
his right hand,

‘Father Leblanc,’ he exclaimed, ‘thou hast heard the
talk in the village,

And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these ships
and their errand.’

Then with modest demeanour made answer the notary
public,—

‘Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am never
the wiser ;

And what their errand may be I know not better than
others.

Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil intention
Brings them here, for we are at peace ; and why then
molest us ?’

‘God’s name !’ shouted the hasty and somewhat iras-
cible blacksmith ;

‘Must we in all things look for the how, and the why,
and the wherefore ?

Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the
strongest !’

But without heeding his warmth, continued the notary
public,—

‘Man is unjust, but God is just ; and finally justice
Triumphs ; and well I remember a story, that often
consoled me,

When as a captive I lay in the old French fort at Port
Royal.’

This was the old man’s favourite tale, and he loved to
repeat it

When his neighbours complained that any injustice
was done them.

‘Once in an ancient city, whose name I no longer
remember,

Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of Justice
Stood in the public square, upholding the scales in its
left hand,

And in its right a sword, as an emblem that justice
presided

Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and homes of
the people.

Even the birds had built their nests in the scales of the
balance,

Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the sun-
shine above them.

But in the course of time the laws of the land were
corrupted ;

Might took the place of right, and the weak were
oppressed, and the mighty

Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in a noble-
man’s palace

That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long a sus-
picion

Fell on an orphan girl who lived as a maid in the
household.

She, after form of trial condemned to die on the
scaffold,

Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue of
Justice.

As to her Father in heaven her innocent spirit ascended,
Lo ! o’er the city a tempest rose ; and the bolts of the
thunder

Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath from
its left hand
Down on the pavement below the clattering scales of
the balance,
And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of a
magpie,
Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls was
inwoven.'
Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was ended,
the blacksmith
Stood like a man who fain would speak, but findeth no
language ;
All his thoughts were congealed into lines on his face,
as the vapours
Freeze in fantastic shape on the window-panes in the
winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on the table,
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with home-
brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in the
village of Grand-Pré ;
While from his pocket the notary drew his papers and
inkhorn,
Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age of the
parties,
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep and
in cattle.
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well were
completed,
And the great seal of the law was set like a sun on the
margin.

Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw on the
table

Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of silver ;
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and the
bridegroom,

Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their
welfare.

Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly bowed and
departed,

While in silence the others sat and mused by the
fireside,

Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out of its
corner.

Soon was the game begun. In friendly contention the
old men

Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful manœuvre,
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach was
made in the king-row.

Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a window's
embrasure,

Sat the lovers, and whispered together, beholding the
moon rise

Over the pallid sea, and the silvery mists of the
meadows.

Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the
angels.

Thus was the evening passed. Anon the bell from
the belfry

Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and
straightway

Rose the guests and departed ; and silence reigned in
the household.

Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on the
door-step

Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it with
gladness.

Carefully then were covered the embers that glowed on
the hearth-stone,

And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of the
farmer.

Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline
followed.

Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the dark-
ness,

Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of the
maiden.

Silent she passed the hall, and entered the door of her
chamber.

Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white,
and its clothes-press

Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were
carefully folded

Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline
woven.

This was the precious dower she would bring to her
husband in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her skill
as a housewife.

Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow and
radiant moonlight

Streamed through the windows, and lighted the room,
till the heart of the maiden

Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous tides
of the ocean.

Ah ! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as she stood
with

Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her
chamber !

Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of the
orchard,

Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of her
lamp and her shadow.

Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a feeling of
sadness

Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds in
the moonlight

Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for a
moment.

And, as she gazed from the window, she saw serenely
the moon pass

Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow
her footsteps,

As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered
with Hagar !

IV

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun on the village of
Grand-Pré.

Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of
Minas,

Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were
riding at anchor.

Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous
labour

Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates
of the morning.

Now from the country around, from the farms and
neighbouring hamlets,

Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian
peasants.

Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the
young folk

Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous
meadows,

Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels
in the greensward,

Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on
the highway.

Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labour were
silenced.

Thronged were the streets with people; and noisy
groups at the house-doors

Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped
together.

Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and
feasted;

For with this simple people, who lived like brothers
together,

All things were held in common, and what one had
was another's.

Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed more
abundant:

For Evangeline stood among the guests of her
father;

Bright was her face with smiles, and words of welcome
and gladness
Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup as she
gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the orchard,
Stript of its golden fruit, was spread the feast of
betrothal.

There in the shade of the porch were the priest and
the notary seated ;

There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the black-
smith.

Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press and
the beehives,

Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of
hearts and of waistcoats.

Shadow and light from the leaves alternately played on
his snow-white

Hair, as it waved in the wind ; and the jolly face of the
fiddler

Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are blown from
the embers.

Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant sound of his
fiddle,

Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and *Le Carillon de*
Dunquerque,

And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the
music.

Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying
dances

Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the
meadows ;

Old folk and young together, and children mingled
among them.

Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's
daughter!

Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the black-
smith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a
summons sonorous

Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows
a drum beat.

Thronged erelong was the church with men. Without,
in the churchyard,

Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and
hung on the headstones

Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from
the forest.

Then came the guard from the ships, and marching
proudly among them

Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dissonant
clangour

Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from ceiling
and casement,—

Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous portal
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will of
the soldiers.

Then uprose their commander, and spake from the
steps of the altar,

Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the royal
commission.

'You are convened this day,' he said, 'by his Majesty's
orders.

Clement and kind has he been; but how you have
answered his kindness,
Let your own hearts reply! To my natural make and
my temper
Painful the task is I do, which to you I know must be
grievous.
Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of our
monarch;
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle
of all kinds
Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves
from this province
Be transported to other lands. God grant you may
dwell there
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable
people!
Prisoners now I declare you; for such is his Majesty's
pleasure!'
As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the
hailstones
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field and shatters
his windows,
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch
from the house-roofs,
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their en-
closures;
So on the hearts of the people descended the words of
the speaker.
Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and
then rose
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,

And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the door-way.

Vain was the hope of escape ; and cries and fierce imprecations

Rang through the house of prayer ; and high o'er the heads of the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,

As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with passion ; and wildly he shouted,—

‘Down with the tyrants of England ! we never have sworn them allegiance !

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and our harvests !’

More he fain would have said, but the merciless hand of a soldier

Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention,

Lo ! the door of the chancel opened, and Father Felician

Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps of the altar.

Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into silence

All that clamorous throng ; and thus he spake to his people ;

Deep were his tones and solemn ; in accents measured and mournful

Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum, distinctly the
clock strikes.

'What is this that ye do, my children? what madness
has seized you?

Forty years of my life have I laboured among you, and
taught you,

Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one
another!

Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and prayers
and privations?

Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and
forgiveness?

This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would
you profane it

Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with
hatred?

Lo ! where the crucified Christ from His cross is
gazing upon you !

See ! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy
compassion !

Hark ! how those lips still repeat the prayer, "O
Father, forgive them !"

Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the wicked
assail us,

Let us repeat it now, and say, "O Father, forgive
them !"

Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the hearts
of his people

Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded the passion-
ate outbreak,

While they repeated his prayer, and said, 'O Father,
forgive them !'

Then came the evening service. The tapers gleamed
from the altar.
Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the
people responded,
Not with their lips alone, but their hearts ; and the Ave
Maria
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls, with
devotion translated,
Rose on the ardour of prayer, like Elijah ascending to
heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings of
ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women
and children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with her
right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that,
descending,
Lighted the village street with mysterious splendour,
and roofed each
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and emblazoned
its windows.
Long within had been spread the snow-white cloth on
the table ;
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey fragrant
with wild-flowers ;
There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese fresh
brought from the dairy,
And, at the head of the board, the great arm-chair of
the farmer.

Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door, as the
sunset

Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad
ambrosial meadows.

Ah ! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had fallen,
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial
ascended,—

Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgiveness, and
patience !

Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered into the
village,

Cheering with looks and words the mournful hearts of
the women,

As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps they
departed,

Urged by their household cares, and the weary feet of
their children.

Down sank the great red sun, and in golden, glimmer-
ing vapours

Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet descending
from Sinai.

Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus
sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the church Evangeline
lingered.

All was silent within ; and in vain at the door and the
windows

Stood she, and listened and looked, till, overcome by
emotion,

'Gabriel !' cried she aloud with tremulous voice ; but
no answer

Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier
grave of the living.

Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of
her father.

Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the board was
the supper untasted,

Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with
phantoms of terror.

Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her
chamber.

In the dead of the night she heard the disconsolate
rain fall

Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by
the window.

Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the
echoing thunder

Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the
world He created!

Then she remembered the tale she had heard of the
justice of Heaven;

Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peacefully
slumbered till morning.

v

Four times the sun had risen and set; and now on the
fifth day

Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the
farm-house.

Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful
procession,

Came from the neighbouring hamlets and farms the
Acadian women,
Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to
the sea-shore,
Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their
dwellings,
Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and
the woodland.
Close at their sides their children ran, and urged on
the oxen,
While in their little hands they clasped some fragments
of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried ; and
there on the sea-beach
Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the
peasants.
All day long between the shore and the ships did the
boats ply ;
All day long the wains came labouring down from the
village.
Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to his
setting,
Echoed far o'er the fields came the roll of drums from
the churchyard.
Thither the women and children thronged. On a
sudden the church-doors
Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching in
gloomy procession
Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient, Acadian
farmers.

Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their homes
and their country,
Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are weary
and wayworn,
So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants
descended
Down from the church to the shore, amid their wives
and their daughters.
Foremost the young men came ; and, raising together
their voices,
Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the Catholic
Missions :—
'Sacred heart of the Saviour ! O inexhaustible
fountain !
Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission
and patience !'
Then the old men, as they marched, and the women
that stood by the wayside,
Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the sun-
shine above them
Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of spirits
departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited in
silence,
Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour of
affliction,—
Calmly and sadly she waited, until the procession
approached her,
And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.
Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running to
meet him,

Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his
shoulder, and whispered :—

‘Gabriel ! be of good cheer ! for if we love one another
Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances
may happen !’

Smiling she spake these words ; then suddenly paused,
for her father

Saw she slowly advancing. Alas ! how changed was
his aspect !

Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire from
his eye, and his footstep

Heavier seemed with the weight of the heavy heart in
his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck and
embraced him,

Speaking words of endearment where words of comfort
availed not.

Thus to the Gaspereau’s mouth moved on that mourn-
ful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of
embarking.

Busily plied the freighted boats ; and in the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too
late, saw their children

Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest
entreaties.

So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with
her father.

Half the task was not done when the sun went down,
and the twilight

Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the
refluent ocean

Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the
sand-beach

Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the
slippery sea-weed.

Farther back in the midst of the household goods and
the wagons,

Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near
them,

Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian
farmers.

Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing
ocean,

Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and
leaving

Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the
sailors.

Then, as the night descended, the herds returned
from their pastures;

Sweet was the moist still air with the odour of milk
from their udders;

Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known bars
of the farm-yard,—

Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand
of the milk-maid.

Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no
Angelus sounded,

Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights
from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had
been kindled,
Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from
wrecks in the tempest.
Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were
gathered,
Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the cry-
ing of children.
Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in
his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing
and cheering,
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate sea-
shore.
Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat
with her father,
And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old
man,
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either
thought or emotion,
E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have
been taken.
Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to
cheer him,
Vainly offered him food ; yet he moved not, he looked
not, he spake not,
But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering
firelight.
'*Benedicite !*' murmured the priest, in tones of com-
passion.
More he fain would have said, but his heart was full,
and his accents

Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child
on a threshold,
Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence of sorrow.
Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head of the maiden,
Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them
Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.
Then sat he down at her side, and they wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn
the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er the horizon
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon mountain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers and piling huge shadows together.
Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs of the village,
Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships that lay in the roadstead.
Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quivering hands of a martyr.
Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning thatch, and, uplifting,

Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a
hundred house-tops
Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame inter-
mingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the
shore and on shipboard.
Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their
anguish,
'We shall behold no more our homes in the village of
Grand-Pré!'
Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the
farm-yards,
Thinking the day had dawned; and anon the lowing
of cattle
Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of dogs
interrupted.
Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the sleep-
ing encampments
Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the
Nebraska,
When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with the speed
of the whirlwind,
Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to the
river.
Such was the sound that arose on the night, as the
herds and the horses
Broke through their folds and fences, and madly rushed
o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the priest
and the maiden

Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and widened
before them ;
And as they turned at length to speak to their silent
companion,
Lo ! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched abroad
on the sea-shore
Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had
departed.
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and the
maiden
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her
terror.
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head on his
bosom.
Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious
slumber ;
And when she awoke from the trance, she beheld a
multitude near her.
Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully gazing
upon her,
Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest compas-
sion.
Still the blaze of the burning village illumined the
landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the faces
around her,
And like the day of doom it seemed to her wavering
senses.
Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the
people,—
'Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier
season

Brings us again to our homes from the unknown land
of our exile,

Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the church-
yard.'

Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste
by the sea-side,

Having the glare of the burning village for funeral
torches,

But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of
Grand-Pré.

And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of
sorrow,

Lo ! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast
congregation,

Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with
the dirges.

'Twas the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the
ocean,

With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurry-
ing landward.

Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of
embarking ;

And with the ebb of the tide the ships sailed out of the
harbour,

Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and the
village in ruins.

PART THE SECOND

I

Many a weary year had passed since the burning of
Grand-Pré,
When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed,
Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into
exile,
Exile without an end, and without an example in story.
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians landed ;
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, when the wind
from the north-east
Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the Banks of
Newfoundland.
Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from city
to city,
From the cold lakes of the North to sultry Southern
savannas,—
From the bleak shores of the sea to the lands where the
Father of Waters
Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them down to
the ocean,
Deep in their sands to bury the scattered bones of the
mammoth.
Friends they sought and homes ; and many, despairing,
heart-broken,
Asked of the earth but a grave, and no longer a friend
nor a fireside.
Written their history stands on tablets of stone in the
churchyards.

Long among them was seen a maiden who waited and
wandered,
Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently suffering all
things.
Fair was she and young: but, alas! before her
extended,
Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of life, with its
pathway
Marked by the graves of those who had sorrowed and
suffered before her,
Passions long extinguished, and hopes long dead and
abandoned,
As the emigrant's way o'er the Western desert is marked
by
Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that bleach in
the sunshine.
Something there was in her life incomplete, imperfect,
unfinished;
As if a morning of June, with all its music and sunshine,
Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading, slowly
descended
Into the east again, from whence it late had arisen.
Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged by the
fever within her,
Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst of
the spirit,
She would commence again her endless search and
endeavour;
Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and gazed on the
crosses and tombstones,
Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that perhaps
in its bosom

He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber
beside him.

Sometimes a rumour, a hearsay, an inarticulate whisper,
Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her
forward.

Sometimes she spake with those who had seen her
beloved and known him,

But it was long ago, in some far-off place or forgotten.
'Gabriel Lajeunesse!' they said; 'Oh yes! we have
seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both have gone
to the prairies;

Coueurs-des-Bois are they, and famous hunters and
trappers.'

'Gabriel Lajeunesse!' said others; 'Oh yes! we have
seen him.

He is a Voyageur in the lowlands of Louisiana.'

Then would they say, 'Dear child! why dream and
wait for him longer?

Are there not other youths as fair as Gabriel? others
Who have hearts as tender and true, and spirits as
loyal?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary's son, who has
loved thee

Many a tedious year; come, give him thy hand and be
happy!

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St. Catherine's
tresses.'

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely but sadly, 'I
cannot!

Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand, and
not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in darkness.'

Thereupon the priest, her friend and father-confessor,
Said, with a smile, 'O daughter! thy God thus speaketh
within thee!

Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was
wasted;

If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full
of refreshment;

That which the fountain sends forth returns again to
the fountain.

Patience; accomplish thy labour; accomplish thy work
of affection!

Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is
godlike.

Therefore accomplish thy labour of love, till the heart is
made godlike,

Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered more
worthy of heaven!

Cheered by the good man's words, Evangeline laboured
and waited.

Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge of the
ocean,

But with its sound there was mingled a voice that
whispered, 'Despair not!'

Thus did that poor soul wander in want and cheerless
discomfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and thorns of
existence.

Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the wanderer's foot-
steps ;—
Not through each devious path, each changeful year of
existence,
But as a traveller follows a streamlet's course through
the valley :
Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam of
its water
Here and there, in some open space, and at intervals
only ;
Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan glooms
that conceal it,
Though he behold it not, he can hear its continuous
murmur ;
Happy, at length, if he find the spot where it reaches
an outlet.

II

It was the month of May. Far down the Beautiful
River,
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of the Wabash,
Into the golden stream of the broad and swift Missis-
sippi,
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by Acadian
boatmen.
It was a band of exiles : a raft, as it were, from the
shipwrecked
Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating together,
Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a common
misfortune ;

Men and women and children, who, guided by hope or
by hearsay,
Sought for their kith and their kin among the few-acred
farmers
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of fair
Opelousas.
With them Evangeline went, and her guide, the Father
Felician.
Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness sombre
with forests,
Day after day they glided adown the turbulent
river ;
Night after night, by their blazing fires, encamped on its
borders.
Now through rushing chutes, among green islands,
where plumelike
Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests, they swept
with the current,
Then emerged into broad lagoons, where silvery sand-
bars
Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling waves of
their margin,
Shining with snow-white plumes, large flocks of pelicans
waded.
Level the landscape grew, and along the shores of the
river,
Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of luxuriant
gardens,
Stood the houses of planters, with negro-cabins and
dove-cots.
They were approaching the region where reigns per-
petual summer,

Where through the Golden Coast, and groves of orange
and citron,
Sweeps with majestic curve the river away to the east-
ward.
They, too, swerved from their course ; and entering
the Bayou of Plaquemine,
Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious
waters,
Which, like a network of steel, extended in every
direction.
Over their heads the towering and tenebrous boughs
of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in mid-
air
Waved like banners that hang on the walls of ancient
cathedrals.
Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken, save by
the herons
Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees returning at
sunset,
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with demoniac
laughter.
Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and gleamed on
the water,
Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar sustain-
ing the arches,
Down through whose broken vaults it fell as through
chinks in a ruin.
Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all things
around them ;
And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of wonder
and sadness,—

Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot be
compassed.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the
prairies,

Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking
mimosa,

So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom
has attained it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a vision, that
faintly

Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on through
the moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that assumed the shape
of a phantom.

Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel wandered
before her,

And every stroke of the oar now brought him nearer
and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the boat, rose one
of the oarsmen,

And, as a signal sound, if others like them per-
adventure

Sailed on those gloomy and midnight streams, blew a
blast on his bugle.

Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors leafy
the blast rang,

Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues to the
forest.

Soundless above them the banners of moss just stirred
to the music.

Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the distance,
Over the watery floor, and beneath the reverberant
branches ;

But not a voice replied ; no answer came from the
darkness ;

And, when the echoes had ceased, like a sense of
pain was the silence.

Then Evangeline slept ; but the boatmen rowed
through the midnight,

Silent at times, then singing familiar Canadian boat-
songs,

Such as they sang of old on their own Acadian
rivers,

While through the night were heard the mysterious
sounds of the desert,

Far off,—indistinct,—as of wave or wind in the forest,
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar of
the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged from the
shades ; and before them

Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafalaya.

Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undula-
tions

Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in beauty,
the lotus

Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the boat-
men.

Faint was the air with the odorous breath of magnolia
blossoms,

And with the heat of noon ; and numberless sylvan
islands,

Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming
hedges of roses,

Near to whose shores they glided along, invited to
slumber.

Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were
suspended.

Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew by
the margin,

Safely their boat was moored ; and scattered about on
the greensward,

Tired with their midnight toil, the weary travellers
slumbered.

Over them vast and high extended the cope of a cedar.
Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower and
the grapevine

Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of
Jacob,

On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending,
descending,

Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from
blossom to blossom.

Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she slumbered
beneath it.

Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of an
opening heaven

Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of regions
celestial.

Nearer, and ever nearer, among the numberless
islands,

Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o'er the
water,

Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters
and trappers.

Northward its prow was turned, to the land of the
bison and beaver.

At the helm sat a youth, with countenance thoughtful
and careworn.

Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his brow,
and a sadness

Somewhat beyond his years on his face was legibly
written.

Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, unhappy and
restless,

Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and of
sorrow.

Swiftly they glided along, close under the lee of the
island,

But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen of
palmettos,

So that they saw not the boat, where it lay concealed
in the willows ;

All undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and unseen,
were the sleepers.

Angel of God was there none to awaken the slumber-
ing maiden.

Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a cloud on
the prairie.

After the sound of their oars on the tholes had died
in the distance,

As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and the
maiden

Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, 'O Father
Felician !

Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wanders.

Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition?

Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my spirit?

Then, with a blush, she added, 'Alas for my credulous fancy!

Unto ears like thine such words as these have no meaning.'

But made answer the reverend man, and he smiled as he answered,—

'Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor are they to me without meaning.

Feeling is deep and still; and the word that floats on the surface

Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the anchor is hidden.

Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the world calls illusions.

Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far away to the southward,

On the banks of the Têche, are the towns of St. Maur and St. Martin.

There the long-wandering bride shall be given again to her bridegroom,

There the long-absent pastor regain his flock and his sheepfold.

Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees;

Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heavens

Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls
of the forest.

They who dwell there have named it the Eden of
Louisiana !'

With these words of cheer they arose and continued
their journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from the western
horizon

Like a magician extended his golden wand o'er the
landscape ;

Twinkling vapours arose ; and sky and water and forest
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and
mingled together.

Hanging between two skies, a cloud with edges of
silver,

Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on the motion-
less water.

Filled was Evangeline's heart with inexpressible sweet-
ness.

Touched by the magic spell, the sacred fountains of
feeling

Glowed with the light of love, as the skies and waters
around her.

— Then from a neighbouring thicket the mocking-bird,
wildest of singers,

Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er the
water,

Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious
music,

That the whole air and the woods and the waves
seemed silent to listen.

Plaintive at first were the tones and sad: then soaring
to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of frenzied
Bacchantes.
Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low
lamentation;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung them abroad
in derision,
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through the
tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower
on the branches.
With such a prelude as this, and hearts that throbbed
with emotion,
Slowly they entered the Tête, where it flows through
the green Opelousas,
And, through the amber air, above the crest of the
woodland,
Saw the column of smoke that arose from a neighbour-
ing dwelling;—
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the distant lowing
of cattle.

III

Near to the bank of the river, o'ershadowed by oaks,
from whose branches
Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic mistletoe
flaunted,
Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatchets
at Yule-tide,

Stood, secluded and still, the house of the herdsman.
A garden
Girded it round about with a belt of luxuriant
blossoms,
Filling the air with fragrance. The house itself was
of timbers
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully fitted together.
Large and low was the roof; and on slender columns
supported,
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and spacious
veranda,
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee, extended
around it.
At each end of the house, amid the flowers of the
garden,
Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's perpetual
symbol,
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless contentions of
rivals.
Silence reigned o'er the place. The line of shadow
and sunshine
Ran near the tops of the trees; but the house itself
was in shadow,
And from its chimney-top, ascending and slowly
expanding
Into the evening air, a thin blue column of smoke
arose.
In the rear of the house, from the garden gate, ran a
pathway
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of the
limitless prairie,

Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly descending.
Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy
 canvas
Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless calm in
 the tropics,
Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of grape-
 vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of the
 prairie,
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and
 stirrups,
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet of deer-
 skin.
Broad and brown was the face that from under the
 Spanish sombrero
Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the lordly look of its
 master.
Round about him were numberless herds of kine, that
 were grazing
Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the vapoury
 freshness
That uprose from the river, and spread itself over the
 landscape.
Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side, and ex-
 panding
Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast, that
 resounded
Wildly and sweet and far, through the still damp air of
 the evening.
Suddenly out of the grass the long white horns of the
 cattle

Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse currents of
ocean.

Silent a moment they gazed, then bellowing rushed o'er
the prairie,

And the whole mass became a cloud, a shade in the
distance.

Then, as the herdsman turned to the house, through
the gate of the garden

Saw he the forms of the priest and the maiden advanc-
ing to meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in amazement,
and forward

Rushed with extended arms and exclamations of
wonder ;

When they beheld his face, they recognised Basil the
blacksmith.

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his guests to the
garden.

There in an arbour of roses with endless question and
answer

Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their
friendly embraces,

Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent and
thoughtful.

Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not ; and now dark
doubts and misgivings

Stole o'er the maiden's heart ; and Basil, somewhat
embarrassed,

Broke the silence and said, 'If you came by the
Atchafalaya,

How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel's boat
on the bayous ?'

Over Evangeline's face at the words of Basil a shade
passed.

Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a tremulous
accent,

'Gone? is Gabriel gone?' and, concealing her face on
his shoulder,

All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and she wept and
lamented.

Then the good Basil said,—and his voice grew blithe as
he said it,—

'Be of good cheer, my child; it is only to-day he
departed.

Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my herds and
my horses.

Moody and restless grown, and tried and troubled, his
spirit

Could no longer endure the calm of this quiet exist-
ence,

Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sorrowful ever,
Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and his troubles,
He at length had become so tedious to men and to
maidens,

Tedious even to me, that at length I bethought me, and
sent him

Unto the town of Adayes to trade for mules with the
Spaniards.

Thence he will follow the Indian trails to the Ozark
Mountains,

Hunting for furs in the forests, on rivers trapping the
beaver.

Therefore be of good cheer; we will follow the fugitive
lover;

He is not far on his way, and the Fates and the streams
are against him.

Up and away to-morrow, and through the red dew of
the morning

We will follow him fast, and bring him back to his
prison.'

Then glad voices were heard, and up from the banks
of the river,

Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came Michael the
fiddler.

Long under Basil's roof had he lived like a god on
Olympus,

Having no other care than dispensing music to mortals.
Far renowned was he for his silver locks and his
fiddle.

'Long live Michael,' they cried, 'our brave Acadian
minstrel!'

As they bore him aloft in triumphal procession; and
straightway

Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greeting the
old man

Kindly and oft, and recalling the past, while Basil,
enraptured,

Hailed with hilarious joy his old companions and
gossips,

Laughing loud and long, and embracing mothers and
daughters.

Much they marvelled to see the wealth of the ci-devant
blacksmith,

All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal
demeanour;

Much they marvelled to hear his tales of the soil and
the climate,
And of the prairies, whose numberless herds were his
who would take them ;
Each one thought in his heart, that he, too, would go
and do likewise.
Thus they ascended the steps, and crossing the breezy
veranda,
Entered the hall of the house, where already the supper
of Basil
Waited his late return ; and they rested and feasted
together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness descended.
All was silent without, and, illuming the landscape
with silver,
Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad stars ; but
within doors,
Brighter than these, shone the faces of friends in the
glimmering lamplight.
Then from his station aloft, at the head of the table, the
herdsman
Poured forth his heart and his wine together in endless
profusion.
Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet Natchi-
toches tobacco,
Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and smiled
as they listened :—
' Welcome once more, my friends, who long have been
friendless and homeless,
Welcome once more to a home, that is better perchance
than the old one !

Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the
rivers ;

Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the
farmer.

Smoothly the ploughshare runs through the soil, as a
keel through the water.

All the year round the orange-groves are in blossom ;
and grass grows

More in a single night than a whole Canadian
summer.

Here, too, numberless herds run wild and unclaimed in
the prairies ;

Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests
of timber

With a few blows of the axe are hewn and framed into
houses.

After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow
with harvests,

No King George of England shall drive you away from
your homesteads,

Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your
farms and your cattle.'

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful cloud from
his nostrils,

While his huge, brown hand came thundering down on
the table,

So that the guests all started ; and Father Felician,
astounded,

Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff half-way to his
nostrils.

But the brave Basil resumed, and his words were milder
and gayer :—

'Only beware of the fever, my friends, beware of the fever !

For it is not like that of our cold Acadian climate,
Cured by wearing a spider hung round one's neck in a
nutshell !'

Then there were voices heard at the door, and footsteps
approaching

Sounded upon the stairs and the floor of the breezy
veranda.

It was the neighbouring Creoles and small Acadian
planters,

Who had been summoned all to the house of Basil
the Herdsman.

Merry the meeting was of ancient comrades and
neighbours :

Friend clasped friend in his arms ; and they who
before were as strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as friends to
each other,

Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country
together.

But in the neighbouring hall a strain of music,
proceeding

From the accordant strings of Michael's melodious fiddle,
Broke up all further speech. Away, like children
delighted,

All things forgotten beside, they gave themselves to
the maddening

Whirl of the giddy dance, as it swept and swayed
to the music,

Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush of flutter-
ing garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the hall, the priest
and the herdsman
Sat, conversing together of past and present and future ;
While Evangeline stood like one entranced, for within
her
Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst of the
music
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an irrepressible
sadness
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole forth into
the garden.
Beautiful was the night. Behind the black wall of
the forest,
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon. On
the river
Fell here and there through the branches a tremulous
gleam of the moonlight,
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a darkened and
devious spirit.
Nearer and round about her, the manifold flowers of
the garden
Poured out their souls in odours, that were their
prayers and confessions
Unto the night, as it went its way, like a silent
Carthusian.
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy with
shadows and night-dews,
Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm and the
magical moonlight
Seemed to inundate her soul with indefinable longings,
As, through the garden-gate, and beneath the shade
of the oak-trees,

Passed she along the path to the edge of the measure-
less prairie.

Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it, and fire-flies
Gleamed and floated away in mingled and infinite
numbers.

Over her head the stars, the thoughts of God in the
heavens,

Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased to marvel
and worship,

Save when a blazing comet was seen on the walls of
that temple,

As if a hand had appeared and written upon them,
'Upharsin.'

And the soul of the maiden, between the stars and
the fire-flies,

Wandered alone, and she cried, 'O Gabriel! O my
beloved!

Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot behold
thee?

Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice does not
reach me?

Ah! how often thy feet have trod this path to the
prairie!

Ah! how often thine eyes have looked on the wood-
lands around me!

Ah! how often beneath this oak, returning from labour,
Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream of me in
thy slumbers!

When shall these eyes behold, these arms be folded
about thee?

Loud and sudden and near the notes of a whippoor-
will sounded

Like a flute in the woods; and anon, through the
neighbouring thickets,
Farther and farther away it floated and dropped into
silence.

‘Patience!’ whispered the oaks from oracular caverns
of darkness:

And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh responded,
‘To-morrow!’

Bright rose the sun next day; and all the flowers
of the garden

Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and anointed
his tresses

With the delicious balm that they bore in their vases
of crystal.

‘Farewell!’ said the priest, as he stood at the shadowy
threshold;

‘See that you bring us the Prodigal Son from his
fasting and famine,

And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when the
bridegroom was coming.’

‘Farewell!’ answered the maiden, and, smiling, with
Basil descended

Down to the river’s brink, where the boatmen already
were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morning, and
sunshine, and gladness,

Swiftly they followed the flight of him who was speeding
before them,

Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf over the desert.

Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day that
succeeded,

Found they the trace of his course, in lake or forest
or river,
Nor, after many days, had they found him; but vague
and uncertain
Rumours alone were their guides through a wild and
desolate country;
Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of Adayes,
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned from the
garrulous landlord,
That on the day before, with horses and guides and
companions,
Gabriel left the village, and took the road of the
prairies.

IV

Far in the West there lies a desert land, where the
mountains
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty and luminous
summits.
Down from their jagged, deep ravines, where the
gorge, like a gateway,
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the emigrant's
wagon,
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walleway and
Owyhee.
Eastward, with devious course, among the Wind-river
Mountains,
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps the
Nebraska;
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the
Spanish sierras.

Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the wind
of the desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, descend
to the ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and solemn
vibrations.
Spreading between these streams are the wondrous,
beautiful prairies ;
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and
sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple
amorphas.
Over them wandered the buffalo herds, and the elk
and the roebuck ;
Over them wandered the wolves, and herds of riderless
horses ;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary
with travel ;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael's
children,
Staining the desert with blood ; and above their
terrible war-trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered
in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the heavens
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of these
savage marauders ;
Here and there rise groves from the margins of swift-
running rivers ;
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of
the desert,

Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by
the brook-side,
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline
heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base of the Ozark
Mountains,
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and trappers
behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the maiden
and Basil
Followed his flying steps, and thought each day to
o'ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the smoke
of his camp-fire
Rise in the morning air from the distant plain; but
at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they found only
embers and ashes.
And, though their hearts were sad at times and their
bodies were weary,
Hope still guided them on, as the magic Fata Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and
vanished before them.
Once, as they sat by their evening fire, there silently
entered
Into their little camp an Indian woman, whose features
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience as great as
her sorrow.
She was a Shawnee woman returning home to her
people,

From the far-off hunting-grounds of the cruel Cam-
anches,
Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-des-Bois, had
been murdered.
Touched were their hearts at her story, and warmest
and friendliest welcome
Gave they, with words of cheer, and she sat and
feasted among them
On the buffalo-meat and the venison cooked on the
embers.
But when their meal was done, and Basil and all his
companions,
Worn with the long day's march and the chase of the
deer and the bison,
Stretched themselves on the ground, and slept where
the quivering fire-light
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their forms
wrapped up in their blankets,
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent she sat and
repeated
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm of her
Indian accent,
All the tale of her love, with its pleasures, and pains,
and reverses.
Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to know that
another
Hapless heart like her own had loved and had been
disappointed.
Moved to the depths of her soul by pity and woman's
compassion,
Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who had suffered
was near her,

She in turn related her love and all its disasters.
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and when she
 had ended
Still was mute ; but at length, as if a mysterious horror
Passed through her brain, she spake, and repeated the
 tale of the Mowis ;
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won and wedded
 a maiden,
But, when the morning came, arose and passed from
 the wigwam,
Fading and melting away and dissolving into the
 sunshine,
Till she beheld him no more, though she followed far
 into the forest.
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed like a
 weird incantation,
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau, who was wooed
 by a phantom,
That through the pines o'er her father's lodge, in the
 hush of the twilight,
Breathed like the evening wind, and whispered love to
 the maiden,
Till she followed his green and waving plume through
 the forest,
And nevermore returned, nor was seen again by her
 people.
Silent with wonder and strange surprise, Evangeline
 listened
To the soft flow of her magical words, till the region
 around her
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her swarthy guest
 the enchantress.

Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Mountains the
moon rose,
Lighting the little tent, and with a mysterious splendour
Touching the sombre leaves, and embracing and filling
the woodland.
With a delicious sound the brook rushed by, and the
branches
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely audible
whispers.
Filled with the thoughts of love was Evangeline's heart,
but a secret,
Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefinite terror,
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the nest of
the swallow.
It was no earthly fear. A breath from the region of
spirits
Seemed to float in the air of night; and she felt for
a moment
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was pursuing a
phantom.
With this thought she slept, and the fear and the
phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was resumed;
and the Shawnee
Said, as they journeyed along, 'On the western slope
of these mountains
Dwells in his little village the Black Robe chief of the
Mission.
Much he teaches the people, and tells them of Mary
and Jesus.

Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep with pain,
as they hear him.'

Then, with a sudden and secret emotion, Evangeline
answered,

'Let us go to the Mission, for there good tidings
await us!'

Thither they turned their steeds; and behind a spur
of the mountains,

Just as the sun went down, they heard a murmur of
voices,

And in a meadow green and broad, by the bank of a river,
Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents of the Jesuit
Mission.

Under a towering oak, that stood in the midst of the
village,

Knelt the Black Robe chief with his children. A
crucifix fastened

High on the trunk of the tree, and overshadowed by
grapevines,

Looked with its agonised face on the multitude kneel-
ing beneath it.

This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through the intri-
cate arches

Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their vespers,
Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus and sighs of
the branches.

Silent, with heads uncovered, the travellers, nearer
approaching,

Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in the evening
devotions.

But when the service was done, and the benediction
had fallen

Forth from the hands of the priest, like seed from the
hands of the sower,
Slowly the reverend man advanced to the strangers,
and bade them
Welcome; and when they replied, he smiled with
benignant expression,
Hearing the homelike sounds of his mother-tongue in
the forest,
And, with words of kindness, conducted them into his
wigwam.
There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on
cakes of the maize-ear
Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-gourd
of the teacher.
Soon was their story told; and the priest with
solemnity answered:—
'Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel,
seated
On this mat by my side, where now the maiden
reposes,
Told me this same sad tale; then arose and continued
his journey!'
Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake with an
accent of kindness;
But on Evangeline's heart fell his words as in winter
the snow-flakes
Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have
departed.
'Far to the north he has gone,' continued the priest;
'but in autumn,
When the chase is done, will return again to the
Mission.'

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek and
submissive,

‘Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad and
afflicted.’

So seemed it wise and well unto all; and betimes on
the morrow,

Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian guides
and companions,

Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed at
the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded each
other,—

Days and weeks and months; and the fields of maize
that were springing

Green from the ground when a stranger she came, now
waving above her,

Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves interlacing, and
forming

Cloisters for mendicant crows and granaries pillaged
by squirrels.

Then in the golden weather the maize was husked,
and the maidens

Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened
a lover,

But at the crooked laughed, and called it a thief in
the corn-field.

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline brought not
her lover.

‘Patience!’ the priest would say; ‘have faith, and
thy prayer will be answered!’

Look at this vigorous plant that lifts its head from
the meadow,
See how its leaves are turned to the north, as true as
the magnet ;
This is the compass-flower, that the finger of God has
planted
Here in the houseless wild, to direct the traveller's
journey
Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste of the
desert.
Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms of
passion,
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller of
fragrance,
But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their
odour is deadly.
Only this humble plant can guide us here, and here-
after
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet with
the dews of nepenthe.'

So came the autumn, and passed, and the winter,—
yet Gabriel came not ;
Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes of the
robin and bluebird
Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet Gabriel
came not.
But on the breath of the summer winds a rumour was
wafted
Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odour of blossom.
Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan
forests,

Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw River.

And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes of St. Lawrence,

Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the Mission.

When over weary ways, by long and perilous marches, She had attained at length the depths of the Michigan forests,

Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and fallen to ruin !

Thus did the long sad years glide on, and in seasons and places

Divers and distant far was seen the wandering maiden ;—

Now in the Tents of Grace of the meek Moravian Missions,

Now in the noisy camps and the battle-fields of the army,

Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and populous cities.

Like a phantom she came, and passed away unremembered.

Fair was she and young, when in hope began the long journey ;

Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.

Each succeeding year stole something away from her beauty,

Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and the shadow.

Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of grey
o'er her forehead,
Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly
horizon,
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the
morning.

v

In that delightful land which is washed by the Dela-
ware's waters,
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of Penn the
apostle,
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream the city
he founded.
There all the air is balm, and the peach is the emblem
of beauty,
And the streets still reëcho the names of the trees of
the forest,
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose haunts
they molested.
There from the troubled sea had Evangeline landed,
an exile,
Finding among the children of Penn a home and a
country.
There old René Leblanc had died; and when he
departed,
Saw at his side only one of all his hundred descendants.
Something at least there was in the friendly streets of
the city,
Something that spake to her heart, and made her no
longer a stranger;

And her ear was pleased with the Thee and Thou of
the Quakers,
For it recalled the past, the old Acadian country,
Where all men were equal, and all were brothers and
sisters.
So, when the fruitless search, the disappointed en-
deavour,
Ended, to recommence no more upon earth, uncom-
plaining,
Thither, as leaves to the light, were turned her
thoughts and her footsteps.
As from the mountain's top the rainy mists of the
morning
Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape below us,
Sun-illuminated, with shining rivers and cities and
hamlets,
So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the
world far below her,
Dark no longer, but all-illuminated with love ; and the
pathway
Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and fair
in the distance.
Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was his
image,
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last she
beheld him,
Only more beautiful made by his death-like silence
and absence.
Into her thoughts of him time entered not, for it was
not.
Over him years had no power ; he was not changed,
but transfigured ;

He had become to her heart as one who is dead, and
not absent ;

Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,
This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had
taught her.

So was her love diffused, but, like to some odorous
spices,

Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with
aroma.

Other hope had she none, nor wish in life, but to follow
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her
Saviour.

Thus many years she lived as a Sister of Mercy ;
frequenting

Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded lanes of
the city,

Where distress and want concealed themselves from
the sunlight,

Where disease and sorrow in garrets languished
neglected.

Night after night, when the world was asleep, as the
watchman repeated

Loud, through the gusty streets, that all was well in
the city,

High at some lonely window he saw the light of her
taper.

Day after day, in the grey of the dawn, as slow through
the suburbs

Plodded the German farmer, with flowers and fruits
for the market,

Met he that meek, pale face, returning home from its
watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence fell on
the city,
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by flocks
of wild pigeons,
Darkening the sun in their flight, with nought in their
claws but an acorn.
And, as the tides of the sea arise in the month of
September,
Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads to a lake
in the meadow,
So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing its natural
margin,
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver stream of exist-
ence.
Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty to charm,
the oppressor ;
But all perished alike beneath the scourge of his
anger ;—
Only, alas ! the poor, who had neither friends nor
attendants,
Crept away to die in the almshouse, home of the
homeless.
Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst of meadows
and woodlands ;—
Now the city surrounds it ; but still, with its gateway
and wicket
Meek, in the midst of splendour, its humble walls
seemed to echo
Softly the words of the Lord : ‘The poor ye always
have with you.’
Thither, by night and by day, came the Sister of
Mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought, indeed, to
 behold there
Gleams of celestial light encircle her forehead with
 splendour,
Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of saints and
 apostles,
Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen at a
 distance.
Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of the city
 celestial,
Into whose shining gates erelong their spirits would
 enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets,
 deserted and silent,
Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of the
 almshouse.
Sweet on the summer air was the odour of flowers
 in the garden ;
And she paused on her way to gather the fairest
 among them,
That the dying once more might rejoice in their
 fragrance and beauty.
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors,
 cooled by the east-wind,
Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from the
 belfry of Christ Church,
While, intermingled with these, across the meadows
 were wafted
Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes in
 their church at Wicaco.

Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the hour on
her spirit :

Something within her said, 'At length thy trials are
ended' ;

And, with light in her looks, she entered the chambers
of sickness.

Noiselessly moved about the assiduous, careful atten-
dants,

Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow, and
in silence

Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and concealing
their faces,

Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of snow by
the roadside.

Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline entered,
Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she passed,
for her presence

Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the walls of
a prison.

And, as she looked around, she saw how Death, the
consoler,

Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed it
forever.

Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night time ;
Vacant their places were, or filled already by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of
wonder,

Still she stood, with her colourless lips apart, while a
shudder

Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flowerets
dropped from her fingers,

And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom of
the morning.

Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible
anguish,

That the dying heard it, and started up from their
pillows.

On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an
old man.

Long, and thin, and grey were the locks that shaded his
temples ;

But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a
moment

Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier
manhood ;

So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are
dying.

Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the
fever,

As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled
its portals,

That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass
over.

Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit
exhausted

Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in
the darkness,

Darkness of slumber and death, forever sinking and
sinking.

Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied
reverberations,

Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that
succeeded

Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,
'Gabriel! O my beloved!' and died away into silence.
Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of
his childhood;
Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers among
them,
Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and, walking
under their shadow,
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his
vision.
Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he lifted his
eyelids,
Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt by his
bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents
unuttered
Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his
tongue would have spoken.
Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling
beside him,
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it suddenly sank
into darkness,
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a
casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the
sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of
patience!

And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her
bosom,

Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, 'Father, I
thank thee !'

* * * * *

Still stands the forest primeval ; but far away from its
shadow,

Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers are
sleeping.

Under the humble walls of the little Catholic church-
yard,

In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and un-
noticed.

Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside
them,

Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are at rest
and forever,

Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no longer are
busy,

Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have ceased
from their labours,

Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have completed
their journey !

Still stands the forest primeval ; but under the shade
of its branches

Dwells another race, with other customs and language.

Only along the shore of the mournful and misty Atlantic

Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers from
exile

Wandered back to their native land to die in its
bosom.

In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are still
 busy ;
Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their kirtles
 of homespun,
And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's story,
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced, neigh-
 bouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail
 of the forest.

APPENDIX

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, though an American poet, is perhaps better known to English readers than any of their own poets except Shakespeare. He appeals to the homely affections and the tenderest feelings of human nature. His poetry has been aptly described as 'a gospel of goodwill set to music which has carried "sweetness and light" to many homes.'

The poet was born at Portland, Maine, on February 27th, 1807, his father being a lawyer and a member of Congress. At the age of fourteen he entered Bowdoin College at Brunswick, where he had as a class-mate Nathaniel Hawthorne, who afterwards became a well-known American author (see No. 4 of *Short Studies in English Literature*). After graduating, Longfellow became a tutor and later professor of modern languages at Bowdoin. He then made a tour in Europe, where he spent three and a half years, residing in turn in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland, and England, collecting material which can be readily traced in his poems. No other poet has so wide and cosmopolitan a range of subject. Returning to America he took up his work as professor, and also engaged in literary work of various kinds. After a while he became Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard University, and after

another tour in Europe, during which his wife died, he began to publish the poems which have made him famous. Among his longer works are :—

The Courtship of Miles Standish

The Song of Hiawatha

The Spanish Student

The Divine Tragedy

The Golden Legend

while some of his shorter pieces, such as *The Psalm of Life*, *The Village Blacksmith*, *Excelsior*, *The Old Clock on the Stairs*, *The Wreck of the 'Hesperus,'* *The Children's Hour*, *My Lost Youth*, *Resignation*, etc., are known wherever the English language is spoken.

Longfellow paid a third visit to Europe in 1842, and on his return settled at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He died on March 24th, 1882.

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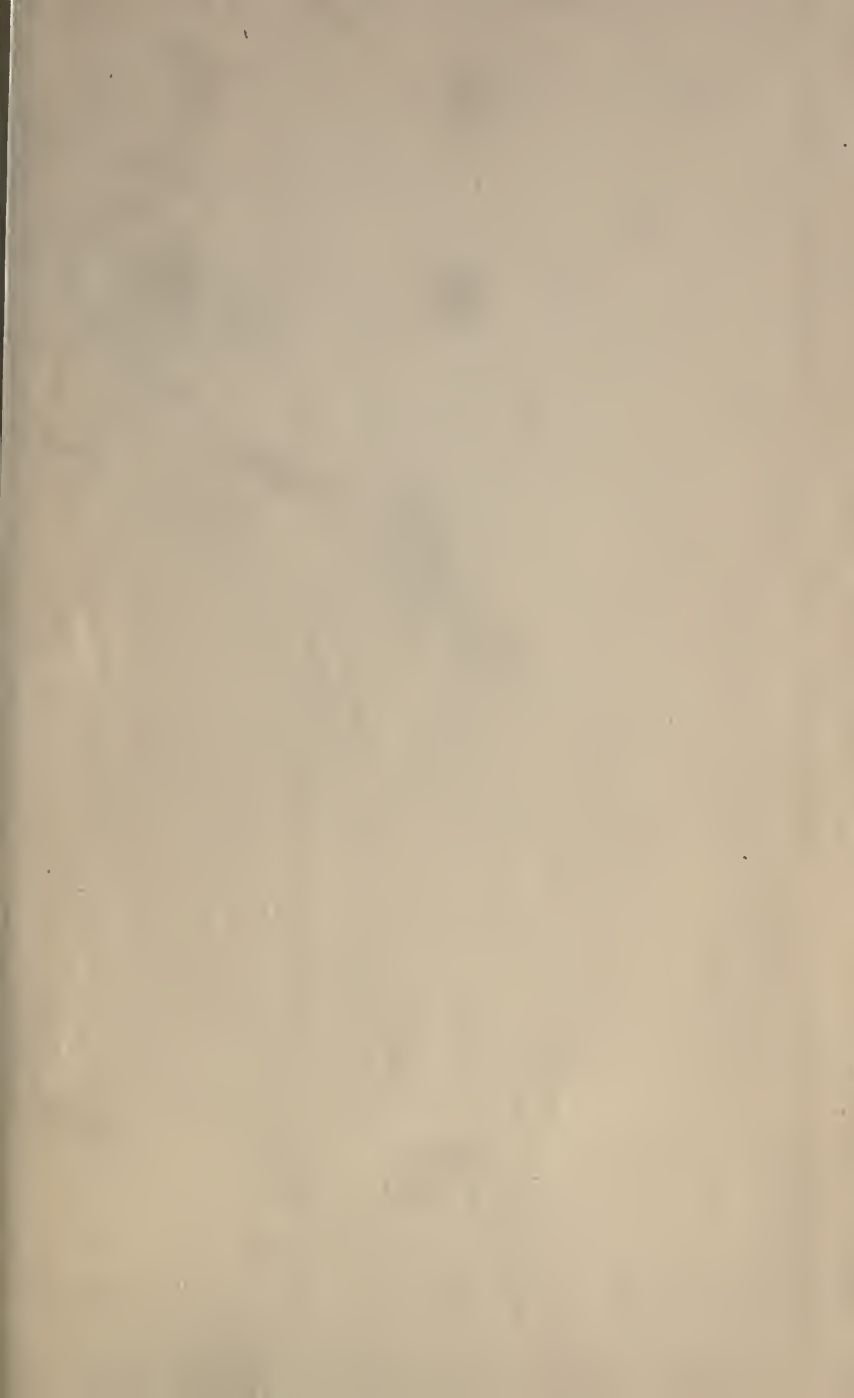
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